



Department Source: City Manager

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: November 20, 2017

Re: Vision Zero Action Plan – Enforcement Critical Action #2, Initiative B

## Executive Summary

In the Vision Zero Action Plan, Enforcement Critical Action #2, Initiative B states, “The Enforcement Team will introduce an ordinance to amend Ch. 14 to ban texting and driving in the City of Columbia for all drivers.” The purpose of this council memo is to address that initiative by proposing to amend the current ordinance on careful, prudent driving (Sec. 14-236) to include language which would prohibit distracted driving for all drivers.

## Discussion

The goal of the City of Columbia's Vision Zero Action Plan is to eliminate all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030. In order to accomplish this goal, the circumstances and behaviors that lead to the traffic deaths and serious injuries need to be reduced or eliminated. A major factor contributing to traffic deaths and traffic injuries is distracted driving. The following statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)<sup>1</sup> illustrates the dangers of distracted driving:

- “Ten percent of fatal crashes, 15 percent of injury crashes, and 14 percent of all police-reported motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2015 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.”
- “In 2015, there were 3,477 people killed and an estimated additional 391,000 injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.”
- “Nine percent of all drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the fatal crashes.”
- “In 2015, there were 551 nonoccupants (pedestrians, bicyclists, and others) killed in distraction-affected crashes.”

The following statistics from the Missouri Department of Transportation, Highway Safety and Traffic Division<sup>2</sup> illustrates the dangers of distracted driving in the City of Columbia from 2011 to 2015:

- There were 7,706 crashes in the City of Columbia from 2011-2015 resulting in 45 fatalities and 4,206 injuries.
- Distracted driving was involved in 448 crashes, three fatalities and 620 injuries in the City of Columbia between 2011 and 2015.

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Statistics and Analysis. Distracted Driving: 2015, in Traffic Safety Research Notes. DOT HS 812 381. March 2017, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: Washington, D.C.

[https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812\\_381\\_distracteddriving2015.pdf](https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/812_381_distracteddriving2015.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Missouri Department of Transportation, Highway Safety and Traffic Division. “Driving Ordinance Updates.” Email from Heather Cole. November 1, 2017.



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- Drivers using communication devices were involved in 31 crashes, and 41 injuries in the City of Columbia between 2011 and 2015. (Please note that we did not collect communication devices on 2011 crash reports.)

The following statistics from the Missouri Department of Transportation, Highway Safety and Traffic Division<sup>3</sup> illustrates the dangers of distracted driving in the City of Columbia from 2012 to 2016:

- There were 7,714 crashes in the City of Columbia from 2012-2016 resulting in 31 fatalities and 3,447 injuries.
- Distracted driving was involved in 404 crashes, 1 fatality and 574 injuries in the City of Columbia between 2012 and 2016.
- Drivers using communication devices were involved in 44 crashes, resulting in 48 injuries in the City of Columbia between 2012 and 2016.

It is important to point out that these statistics underrepresent the negative impact of distracted driving because distraction-affected crashes are underreported for a variety of reasons (i.e. negative implications associated with distracted driving; law enforcement crash reports vary across jurisdictions creating inconsistencies in reporting; information indicating distractions may not be available to law enforcement and therefore it is not reported; etc.).<sup>4</sup>

Often times, when people think of distracted driving they usually think of using a cell phone or texting while driving. Although those are both examples of distracted driving behaviors, distracted driving includes many more behaviors that pose dangers to vehicle occupants, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other road users. According to the NHTSA, in 2015, 14% of distraction-affected fatal crashes and 8% of distraction-affected injury crashes involved cell phone use.<sup>5</sup> This means that 86% of distraction-affected fatal crashes and 92% of distraction-affected injury crashes involved a distracted driving behavior other than cell phone use. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Distracted driving is driving while doing another activity that takes your attention away from driving.”<sup>6</sup> Examples of distracted driving include, but are not limited to using a mirror to engage in grooming; reading anything located in the vehicle other than the operation information displayed on vehicle gauges and equipment; writing; drawing; manually inputting information into a GPS or mapping device; or turning one's head substantially away from the path of travel to observe things in the vehicle or outside the vehicle but contrary to the path of travel.

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<sup>3</sup> Missouri Department of Transportation, Highway Safety and Traffic Division. “Driving Ordinance Updates.” Email from Heather Cole. November 1, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> National Center for Statistics and Analysis. Distracted Driving: 2015, in Traffic Safety Research Notes. DOT HS 812 381. March 2017, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: Washington, D.C.

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<sup>5</sup> National Center for Statistics and Analysis. Distracted Driving: 2015, in Traffic Safety Research Notes. DOT HS 812 381. March 2017, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: Washington, D.C.

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<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention. Page last updated on June 9, 2017. [https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/distracted\\_driving/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/distracted_driving/index.html).



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As a result of this information, rather than just address a specific piece of the distracted driving issue by banning texting and driving for all drivers in the City of Columbia, the Vision Zero Enforcement Team recommends that the City address the whole distracted driving issue by amending the current ordinance on careful, prudent driving (Sec. 14-236) to include a subsection specifically targeting distracted driving behaviors. (Please see proposed amended ordinance for specific language.)

At the request of Councilperson Thomas we have also attached distracted driving and texting related ordinances that other communities in Missouri have passed.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None.  
Long-Term Impact: None.

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impacts

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Public Safety, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

## Legislative History

Date	Action
05/15/2017	REP37-17: City of Columbia Vision Zero Action Plan 2017-2020.
12/19/2016	PR178-16: Adopting a "Vision Zero" Policy; setting a goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries in Columbia by 2030. The vote on PR178-16, as amended, was recorded as follows: VOTING YES: TRAPP, SKALA, THOMAS, NAUSER, PETERS, TREECE, RUFFIN). VOTING NO: NO ONE. Policy resolution declared adopted.

## Suggested Council Action

Direct staff to bring back the careful, prudent driving ordinance (Sec. 14-236) with the proposed amendments on distracted driving.